



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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For Immediate Release

Friday, Jan. 24, 2003

## Grassley Advances Continued Funding for Welfare Programs

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, was successful in securing continued funding for welfare programs in the Fiscal Year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill that passed the full Senate last night. Grassley said he intends to pursue reauthorization of the welfare program in the Finance Committee this year.

"These programs help low-income families make the transition from dependence to self-sufficiency," Grassley said. "We absolutely have to continue funding these programs without interruption. Any lapse would put families in jeopardy. Unfortunately, the Democratic-controlled Senate failed to update these welfare programs in the last Congress. This is a stop-gap measure until the new Congress addresses these issues."

Grassley's provision extends funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs consistent with the provisions established in the continuing resolution. This provision extends the basic TANF grant through the end of Sept. 30, 2003. The TANF grant provides assistance to families making the transition from welfare to work.

Grassley's provision also extends funding for the TANF supplemental grant program. The supplemental grant provides resources to 17 states that either receive the lowest welfare funds per person or have high rates of population growth.

The Grassley provision also extends Transitional Medical Assistance, which provides for families who have lost their Medicaid because of increased hours of work, earnings or child support payments, for up to 12 months. This program is essential for low-income parents leaving welfare. Without it, there are few other ways through which such adults can maintain Medicaid coverage or private health insurance, Grassley said.

"Because of the Senate Democratic leadership's failure to act on welfare reform in the last Congress, our nation's safety net program is outdated in some cases," Grassley said. "It needs maintenance and improvements, just like any major program that impacts so many people. I'm in the process of meeting with each member of the committee one-on-one to talk about each person's priorities, including welfare reform. We won't be able to determine the specific elements of a welfare bill until our committee members have had an opportunity to weigh in. My goal is to enact a bipartisan bill as soon as possible."

The next step for the provisions in the omnibus appropriations bill is consideration by a House-Senate conference committee to resolve differences between the House- and Senate-passed

versions of the bill.